

Beyond the Iron Curtain: The emergence and causation of the Green movement in the USSR

Caspell, James

Erstveröffentlichung / Primary Publication
Dissertation / phd thesis

Empfohlene Zitierung / Suggested Citation:

Caspell, J. (2007). *Beyond the Iron Curtain: The emergence and causation of the Green movement in the USSR*. London. <https://nbn-resolving.org/urn:nbn:de:0168-ssoar-52813-8>

Nutzungsbedingungen:

Dieser Text wird unter einer CC BY Lizenz (Namensnennung) zur Verfügung gestellt. Nähere Auskünfte zu den CC-Lizenzen finden Sie hier:
<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/deed.de>

Terms of use:

This document is made available under a CC BY Licence (Attribution). For more Information see:
<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0>

**Beyond the Iron Curtain:
The emergence and causation of the Green movement in the USSR**

Contents

1. Introduction

- 1.1. Context of analysis
- 1.2. Purpose of analysis
- 1.3. Methodology and structure

2. Theoretical Framework

- 2.1 Political opportunity structures
- 2.2 The role of collective consciousness
- 2.3 Social construction, micromobilisation and framing processes
- 2.4 Structure versus agency?

3. A Changing Structural Context: *Glasnost*, *Perestroika* and *Demokratizatsiia*

- 3.1 *Glasnost* and *Perestroika*
- 3.2 *Demokratizatsiia* – The introduction of competitive elections
- 3.3 The importance of political opportunities to the Green movement

4. The Origins and Construction of the Soviet Green Movement

- 4.1 Historical context of environmental grievances
- 4.2 The development of an environmental collective consciousness
- 4.3 Chernobyl – The amplification of framing processes
- 4.4 The role of “Environmental Nationalism”
- 4.5 Collective agency and resource mobilisation

5. Conclusions

References

1. Introduction

1.1 Context of analysis

The last decade of the Soviet Union witnessed unprecedented sociological and political change following the advent of Mikhail Gorbachev's policies of *glasnost* and *perestroika*. Shifting tectonic plates of political opportunities provided the space for social movements to emerge that were critical of the *status quo* for the first time. The birth of political toleration allowed public acknowledgement that Soviet industrialisation had led to widespread environmental degradation and catastrophe – and an environmental movement emerged which opposed it.

The cultural and scientific intelligentsia inside and outside of the USSR had long critiqued the incompatibility of Soviet socialism in practice with that of socialism in theory, both on human and ecological grounds. Aside from elite criticism, thousands of ordinary Soviet citizens were becoming increasingly intolerant of the environmental degradation experienced in their workplaces and local communities. Famously, the social and environmental effect of the explosion at the Chernobyl nuclear power station in 1986, 5km from the model Soviet town of Pripyat, represented a nadir for those who insisted that Soviet industrialisation was in harmony with people and planet. The breadth and magnitude of environmental problems fuelled a broad Green movement that could finally voice its concerns as a result of relaxed levels of political repression (French 1990: 28). In the space of a decade, environmental activism emerged from the underground, forming an integral part of the kaleidoscopic political landscape emerging across the USSR.

1.2 Purpose of analysis

This dissertation will seek to account for the rise of the Green movement within the Soviet Union in the context of its changing social structure exhibited throughout the 1980's. It will attempt to explain why this movement emerged when it did and how it did in the context of the Soviet political and social system, using a theoretical framework that considers both structural and agency-orientated factors.

This evaluation will exhibit how structural environments affect social movements and how changes to the political opportunity structure give rise to their emergence. Like all social movements, the Soviet Green movement owed its emergence to the coalescence of several causal factors. System-wide structural changes, the emergence of a collective environmental conscience as well as the ability of the movement to seize political opportunities through the mobilisation of activists and resources, all require analysis. The task of this dissertation is to recognise all relevant factors which acted as both causes and catalysts of the Green movement, and to attribute relevant analytical weight to each.

1.2 Methodology and structure

McAdam et al. (1996) and Foweraker (1995) discuss the utility of various sociological traditions, providing an understanding of the dynamic nature of social movements in their construction rather than present them simply as static, passive entities within respective political environments. This dissertation will adopt a similarly dynamic analysis; a summary of theoretical frameworks will precede the specific analysis of the structural and agency-orientated causes of the Soviet Green movement.

I will evaluate the historical structure of the Soviet Union and how this changed during the period relevant to the emergence of many social movements, including the Green movement. However, underlying these societal changes exists at a more micro level the dynamics where the movement came into existence, forming a recognisable niche in Soviet political society. A structural analysis alone could superficially homogenise the causal factors of the Green movement with those of other movements that occurred in the 1980's, such as the women's, nationalist and trade union movements. Therefore, I will also seek to identify the relevance of factors pertinent to the Green movement that defined its social construction, such as the agency of collective actors. I will use qualitative and quantitative data to identify the root and branch causes of the Green movement, how and why it varied across the Republics and how it manifested itself both within and without the conventional channels of political power. As such, I will investigate cases of environmental degradation and emergency that led to widespread environmental concern, the

emergence of groups, electoral performance and mass protest relating to environmental issues.

I will primarily use literature from the period in question prior to the Soviet collapse as it will better explain the reasons for the emergence of Green politics from within the sociological framework, rather than literature clouded by the collapse of the USSR as a social, economic and political system. The dissertation will not focus on the outcomes of the Soviet Green movement *per se*, nor the effect that the collapse of the USSR had on the movement. Rather, I simply seek to emphasise the existence and growth of a discernible Green social movement within the USSR in the 1980's and to provide a thorough explanation for its causal factors.

2. Analysing social movements - a theoretical framework

It is arguably the case that social movements emerge dynamically, embedded within structural environments, but also because of context and agency specific factors. Whilst a range of theories exist to explain why social movements emerge that may *prima facie* appear contradictory, I will argue that there is some causal significance in several theories and the validity of each is by no means mutually exclusive to the utility of others.

When seeking to identify a 'social movement', there is some consensus of the prerequisite conditions across various sociological schools. It must embody a collective identity, harbour one or a number of grievances concerning the existing political society, demonstrate a capacity to carry out collective action and entwined with a broader group of structural, contextual factors commonly known as the political opportunity structure (Klandermans 1997: 2; Oberschall, 1996: 94). Social movements represent 'collective challenges by people with common purposes,' interacting with political elites and authorities (Tarrow 1998: 4). However, acting 'collectively' is not the monopoly of social movements (ibid.: 3). What segregates social movements from other contentious political entities is their potential to mobilise and exhibit a readiness to act collectively (Gamson 1975: 15). By its very nature, a social *movement* is a dynamic and active political body rather than a static, responsive entity.

Social movements exhibit mobilisation through 'unconventional' political strategies and the threat of social change to displace dominant political elites and structures (Scott 1990: 6). They are intrinsically political as they are motivated by the objective of not simply changing the norms and values existent within a society, but to also influence law-making agendas and threaten the existing political order (Tilly 1999: 257; McAdam 1988: 128). However, whilst social movements are dynamic, they are also subject to the changing structural situations in a political society (Klandermans 1997: 6). This is no more evident than in the structural change which gave rise to the Soviet Green movement in the 1980's.

2.1 Political Opportunity Structures

According to Tarrow, history suggests that whilst there tend to be common factors that unite social movements in their causation in different societies, what does vary is the level and type of opportunity that social movements are afforded, the constraints on their freedom of action and the threats they perceive to their interests and objectives (1994: 71). Kitschelt concurs that a society's political opportunity structure is the most useful explanation for the comparative difference between the emergence and success of different social movements (1986).

As Kitschelt surmises, political opportunity structures,

‘[...] are comprised of specific configurations of resources, institutional arrangements and historical precedents for social mobilisation, which facilitate the development of protest movements in some instances and constrain them in others.’ (1986: 58).

Such structures define the environment in which a movement is forced to operate, but more pertinently the likelihood of any movement emerging in the first instance. Thus political opportunity environments shape both the possibility of a movement and the tangibility that the changes advocated can be realised (ibid.: 63). The openness of a political system, the number of groups in which power is vested and the extent to which power is decentralised all comprise the political opportunity environment. Such factors coagulate to define the extent to which a political environment may facilitate or impede social movements.

The nature of political traditions and structures within a regime, as well as internal and external interactions across state boundaries, also play a role in outlining political opportunity structures. The emergence of social groups is often determined by the level of organisation of preceding forms of social association (McAdam et al. 1988: 703). Therefore, movements do not always emerge simply because individuals choose to join a struggle. Rather established groups can redefine grievances and group membership in order to include commitment to new causes (Friedman and McAdam 1992: 163). Pre-existing social networks provide the blueprint against which movements emerge, articulating new and outstanding grievances (Foweraker

1995: 12). Global shifts in perceptions and knowledge, often because of events such as the Chernobyl disaster, also provide new opportunities within political societies (Tarrow 1998: 10; Hopkins 1993: 53). Many Soviet commentators felt that, “the time [had] come to set up a party on the basis of the ideology common to all Greens in the various countries of the world” (Hlazon 1989: 2). Such shifts and events also play a key role in exacerbating existing grievances, and therefore induce a greater propensity for agency. One of the main causes of collective mobilisation is often the exacerbation of pre-existing grievances, a hypothesis that this dissertation will support concerning the Soviet Green movement.

The development of political consciousnesses driving social movements is often determined by the level of repression within a political environment (See Lipset 1983: 2; Geary 1981; Marks 1989). Tilly defines repression as, “any action by another group which raises the contenders’ cost of collective action” (1978: 100). Different modes of repression have stunted and elicited social movements throughout history. Meanwhile, the centralisation of the ideological state apparatus, as existed in the Soviet Union, provides less scope for shifting alliances, manoeuvre and fragmented elites that could be exploited. Toqueville wrote, alluding to the idea that groups act on opportunities, that “the most perilous moment for a [...] government is [...] when it seeks to mend its own ways” (1955: 176-7). There is no doubt that social movements are affected by their political environment, none more so than the Green movement in the Soviet Union where political opportunities were emerging for the first time. of its own volition, the Soviet elite created the opportunities for the Green movement and other movements to emerge.

2.2 The role of collective consciousness

Analysis of political opportunity structures alone arguably only explains how a movement *can* emerge and not necessarily *why* it emerged. Social movements are also affected by many micro issues, such as their ability to mobilise resources, and macro issues, such as the economic and social forces which cause social conflict and grievances in the first place.

Adopting a Marxist analysis, the emergence of social movements, such as the labour movement, is fuelled by the development of collective consciousness (See, for

example, Lukács 1968). The political environment defines a movement's relative success, but not the reasons for its existence in the first instance; "The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggle" (Marx 1848: 1). For Marxists, social movements are linked to a materialist discourse dependent on the inherent contradictions of a given economic system that make its dismantling inevitable. Such an analysis, if accurate, is far more relevant in identifying root causation than levels of parliamentary openness and pluralism. It can be argued that all modern social movements can in some way be entwined to the alienation, exploitation and immiseration caused by a capitalist mode of production. The manifestation that movements take in respective societies represents merely their subjective construction, rather than their objective motivations and root causes. Even Kitschelt – a non-Marxist – identifies the emergence of the anti-nuclear movement in the Western world as being in response to the burgeoning bureaucracy and technological control that has increasingly regulated social life in late capitalism (1986: 58). Social cleavages could also be identified in supposedly 'communist' states, which many theorists have analysed as being 'state capitalist' and therefore riddled with a similar class dynamic as that between the proletariat and bourgeoisie in capitalist states (Singleton 1976: xvi; Marcy 1990: 267-276; Cliff 1955).

2.3 Social construction, micromobilisation and framing processes

Whilst a structural approach is relevant in an objective sense, such an approach on its own does not explain the comparative differences between different social movements in terms of varying emergence and articulation of grievances. A dependency on political opportunities and consciousness does not consider the role of mobilisation of resources and activists within a social movement (Tarrow 1986: 77). A more nuanced understanding of the role of political environments and the development of agency, interaction and micromobilisation within them proves is often salient.

Klandermans (1997: 5) argues that the collective identities within social movements are the result of the psycho-sociological interactions between individuals who share similar experiences and personal identities. However as Langlois (2001) suggests, the collective interests of a social movement do not always mirror the sum of personal interests, which may vary amongst its constituencies. In the context of the

Soviet Green movement, the intelligentsia, workers, peasants and scientists often held overlapping but also separate reasons for supporting the collective identity of the movement – mirroring the emergent structure within Soviet society.

Aside from through empirical experiences and discrete interests, social identities are formed by the framing context in which people live and operate (Snow et al. 1986: 464; Tarrow 1998: 2). The ‘micromobilisation’ context is the specific local setting in which processes of collective common interests combine with forms of local organisation (McAdam 1988:135). Analysing micromobilisation provides scope to identify potential incentives for the formation of social movements that encourage collective action, such as geographical proximity, frame alignment and how interaction amongst members produces loyalty associations on a political and personal level, strengthening collective consciousness (ibid.: 137; Snow and Benford, 1988).

Social movements are often incubated within the micro arena, providing a favourable setting for the construction of common identities and collective mobilisation (Foweraker 1995:12; Snow and Benford, 1988: 194). Such framing localities are not independent of their political and social contexts; social movements at local levels still represent the class cleavages, deprivation and, relevant to this dissertation, ecological imbalance evident through society. However, factors relevant to particular localities can shape the organisation and mobilisation of different constituent groups across regions within a particular movement – a crucial factor in explaining the relative differences within a movement.

2.4 Structure versus agency?

As Carlsnaes states, “the agency-structure problem...has at present evolved into what is often claimed to constitute *the* central problem in social and political theory” (1992: 245). Structuralists tend to see the agent merely as a ‘role-player’ who is subject to the internalisation of society’s norms and values through socialisation; “people’s own reasons, accounts, justifications, and so on, play no part,” (Layder, 1994: 22). Such rigidity is identifiable in orthodox Marxist and functionalist accounts of the emergence of social movements. In contrast, the likes of Kitschelt use variants

of rational choice theory, such as the strategic choice model, to explain how actors seek to maximise their own interests. Agency centred accounts tend to portray that “external structures [do not] play any part in the conduct of social life” (Layder, 1994: 52). Thus, traditional approaches tend to adopt an analysis based entirely on structure *or* agency, presenting them as mutually exclusive alternatives. However many sociologists, including post-modernists and neo-Marxists, acknowledge that both structure *and* agency contribute to a holistic social analysis. For example, Giddens’s structuration theory replaces the perceived dualism of structure and agency with a ‘duality of structure’:

“By the *duality of structure* I mean that social structures are both constituted by human agency, and yet at the same time they are the very *medium* of this constitution” (Giddens 1976: 121; original emphasis).

It is therefore entirely possible to identify a social constructivist causation relevant to the emergence of the Soviet Green movement – including both structural causes, and those elements of collective agency that coalesced to provide for its emergence. The task will be to identify those causes and catalysts that are primary, and those that are secondary. All such theoretical questions are context specific, and this dissertation will draw on them where relevant in order to identify and explain the plethora of causal factors beneath the emergence of the Green movement in the Soviet Union.

3. The Structural Context – *Glasnost*, *Perestroika* and *Demokratizatsiia*

No explanation of the numerous emergent Soviet social movements would be complete without discussion of the changing structural context which created the political opportunities for such movements to arise. Indeed, the most prominent sociological phenomenon that arose from Gorbachev's reformist policies of *glasnost* and *perestroika* was the rise of these social movements (Butterfield and Sedatis 1991: 1). This time of 'openness' and 'restructuring' was in stark contrast to the repression that ephemeral pressure groups had endured under Stalin onwards (Barnett 1988: 55-59; Matthews 1978: 147-157). By the end of the 1980's, a range of groups had come to wrestle policy making initiative away from Communist apparatchiks, and even the reformist leadership that had created such opportunities in the first instance (Butterfield and Sedatis 1991: 1). The alteration of the opportunity structure can be analysed in two parts: firstly the advent of *glasnost*, and secondly the introduction of competitive elections for the first time in the USSR.

3.1 *Glasnost* and *Perestroika*

Until the advent of *glasnost* and *perestroika* the emergence of the Green movement remained insignificant. Encumbered with an institutional memory of repression despite previous promises of 'reform' under Khrushchev, Brezhnev et al., Green-minded groups were originally cautious of appearing overtly critical of the Soviet regime (Gorbachev 1987: 69). However, between April 1985 and July 1987, the number and variety of "informal"¹ groups comprising new social movements was noticeably expanding (Smelser, 1988: 695 – 737); by January 1988 estimates neared 30,000 of such informal groups (Shenin 1988: 3) and by 1989, this number had doubled (Pravda, February 10th 1989: 1). Though the reliability of such data is questionable, given the absence of scientifically verified figures, the trends indicated both by official and informal sources, inside and outside of the USSR, display a huge increase in social movement activity throughout the *glasnost* period (Butterfield and Sedatis 1991: 1).

¹ The official name for the movement groups comprising social movements, in contrast to "official" groups such as local Soviets and Communist Parties.

Glasnost was introduced alongside *perestroika*, the general policy of restructuring, in the months immediately following Gorbachev's selection as Communist Party General Secretary in May 1985 (Suny 1998: 451-453). Gorbachev had publicly criticised the social and economic stagnation that had taken place in the 1970's and 1980's, and sought to reinvigorate all aspects of Soviet society. He persuaded Soviet elites that true 'restructuring' could not take place without direct social input, and that no one was better placed to lead the changes required in Soviet society than Soviet citizens themselves (Butterfield and Sedatis 1991: 4). Therefore, the collective interests that had for so long been suppressed, including the collective voice of the environmental movement, were incubated and liberated by the introduction of *glasnost* (ibid.: 4).

Relatively uncensored exposure of Stalin's crimes in the state media along with an increase in toleration of protests led by radical groups such as the Democratic Union, served to provide important information to social movements that the political opportunity structure now existed to make public their grievances (Harvey 2000: 345). It became increasingly clear that environmentalists would be able to mobilise unhindered by the state machinery, signposting new political opportunities (Zumbrunnen 1992: 206; Butterfield and Sedatis 1991: 4).

Informal environmental groups initially remained outside of the official processes of political participation, at least until alternative parties to the Communist Party of the Soviet Union were tolerated (Butterfield and Sedatis 1991: 1). However, in being allowed to confront the status quo and challenge existent societal norms and values, informal environmental groups became increasingly successful in influencing the agenda-setting process both centrally and locally. Environmental groups increasingly succeeded in co-opting official state organisations and even replacing them in the role of setting the policy agenda (See Jenkins and Klandeermans 1995).

3.2 *Demokratizatsiia* – The introduction of competitive elections

In 1989, the opportunities for social movements again expanded, through the introduction of competitive elections at local, regional and republican levels; the creation of opportunities for the Green movement was again at the initiative of

Gorbachev and Communist Party reformers. At a Central Committee plenary in January 1987, Gorbachev announced a new maxim with which he wanted to revolutionise the Soviet Union: *demokratizatsiia* (democratisation). Despite initial elite opposition, in June 1988, Gorbachev again pushed the agenda of democratisation, arguing that greater representation and accountability was necessary in the Soviet system, allowing Soviet citizens to pick competent and responsive leaders rather than Party careerists (Butterfield and Sedatis 1991: 5).

Gorbachev and his advisors sought to redefine the very understanding of interest representation in Soviet society. Reformist advisors close to Gorbachev, such as Tatiana Zaslavskaiia, openly claimed that the traditional view of Soviet society no longer applied. Historically, the Communist Party had held that there existed two classes in Soviet society – workers and peasants – with one stratum – the intelligentsia (Littlejohn 1984: 36-40; Parkin 1972: 149; Butterfield and Sedatis 1991: 5). However, Gorbachev, Zaslavskaiia and others argued for democratisation on the basis that such a view no longer represented the modern Soviet Union, highlighting that thousands of interest groups, at local and national level, were now conflicting with one another with no representative outlet (Soviet Sociology, 1988: 7-27). As such, in 1988 Gorbachev emphasised that a restructured political system was required to adequately represent all such interests, including environmental grievances (Butterfield and Sedatis 1991: 5). Democratisation, “was the chief guarantee of the irreversibility [of *perestroika*]” (Aganbegyan 1989: 165).

By 1989, Gorbachev had quelled opposition to democratisation and pushed through the constitutional amendments that provided the legal basis for competitive elections for the first time in the USSR (Izvestiia, December 4, 1988: 1-3). The Supreme Soviet, which had previously consisted of 1,500 members and convened just twice a year for three or four day sessions, was replaced with a bi-cameral parliamentary system. The new lower house, the Congress of People’s Deputies was a 2,250 member body that would meet twice yearly for several weeks at a time. The Congress would now select 450 of its own members for the newly comprised Supreme Soviet, which would meet twice a year for several months at a time. The new format allowed for greater formal and informal discussion of policy, and for

greater democratic deliberation and participation in the decision-making process at a national level (See Chainikov 1990: 3-10; Butterfield and Sedatis 1991: 12).

However, the fundamental electoral change in priming the political opportunity structure was the tolerance of candidates to run against the Communist Party. By October 1990, *Pravda* reported that 11,000 informal organisations and 20 alternative political parties had fielded candidates since the advent of competitive elections (Lane 1990: 122). The historic elections of March 1989 therefore saw Deputies elected, with many environmental activists elected as candidates representing environmental social movements. In Ukraine, the leader of *Zelenyi Svit* (Green World), Iurii Shcherbak, was elected to the Congress of People's Deputies in 1989 on almost an exclusively environmental ticket. "Ecological Initiatives", an organisation of young doctors, engineers and students in the city of Dneprodzerzhinsk also succeeded in having one of their activists elected to Congress. The Latvian Popular Front, which included several environmentalists, won 26 out of 34 seats contested whilst the equivalent informal group in Lithuania – *Sajudis* – claimed 34 of 42 seats (Komjaunimo Tiesa, March 29, 1989). According to the Soviet Weekly *New Times*, the elections of 1989 saw 300 "ecologically minded" Deputies elected, some 15 per cent of the total (Lane 1990: 216).

A fundamental consideration for the Green movement was the extent to which they should formalise their structures in response to collective framing along republican lines. Should they should pursue their aims as Greens parties, or remain campaigning outside of the formal politics altogether? Eventually, akin to Green movements in the West, Soviet Greens often sought to operate both within and outside of the electoral system simultaneously (Fisher 1990; Parkin 1990).

As a result, explicit and formal Green parties existed in Latvia, Lithuania, Estonia, Moldova, Belarus and Ukraine before the collapse of the USSR. In March 1990, Greens came to hold seven seats in the Estonian parliament and eight in its Supreme Council. The Estonian green movement had emerged in the late 1980's out of local environmental protests and became the focus of anti-communist activists and the fight for independence. As part of a nationalist front, they emphasised the need to protect the Baltic Sea and opposed phosphorus mining in the North of Estonia

(Ziegler 1991: 115). Their success as a formal Party saw their entry into the National Government in 1990 - the Supreme Council elected the first non-communist government in April 1990 with the Chairman of the Estonian Greens, Toomas Frey, was elected to the position of Environment Minister (Rüdig 2002: 1). Similarly, six Greens were elected to the Latvian parliament and nine in Lithuania (Green 1990). In Ukraine, the leadership of *Zelenyi Svit* originally supported the idea that its Green Party, founded in 1990, would operate in conjunction with the Communist Party and that they would espouse no ideological doctrine (Marple 1991: 142). There had existed concerns that over-formalisation could result in the displacement of the movement's initial motivations (See Kriesi: 156). In working inside and outside of political structures, *Zelenyi Svit* maximised its success and in 1991, the National Government invited Shcherbak to become Environment Minister (Rüdig 2002: 2). Unlike the first competitive elections in 1989, the 1990 election campaigns saw movement groups campaign more actively for electoral success (Butterfield and Sedatis 1991: 2). The first set of elections had shaken off previous cynicism regarding Gorbachev's commitment to democracy. Between December 1989 and 1991, until the collapse of the USSR, the successful trend continued in elections run at republic and municipality levels as ties between local environmental activists and the electing demos grew stronger (Butterfield and Sedatis 1991: 6). According to predication, Soviet Green parties underachieved in the elections of spring 1990, though as French (1990: 33) acknowledges, this was largely due to the success of the movement – virtually all competing parties promised increased environmental protection. Environmentalist positions became extremely popular with Soviet voters, irrespective of whether they were endorsed formally by environmental organisations (Ziegler 1991: 127).

The widespread defeat of key *nomenklatura* candidates (in Leningrad the Communist Party First Secretary who was also a member of the Politburo, ran without opposition and still lost) marked the increasing inability of Communist elites to attract popular support, underlining the increased opportunities for Green candidates. Environmental groups realised through their electoral success the vulnerability of the Communist Party elite, and the potency of winning elections in furthering their aims. Competitive elections proved a magnificent political opportunity, which gave rise to more coordinated and professional Green movements that became electoral

machines, as well as popular lobbying groups (Butterfield and Sedatis 1991: 6). By introducing *glasnost*, *perestroika* and *demokratizatsiia* early in his time of leadership, Gorbachev rapidly induced participation from an initially sceptical population. Millions harboured deep-rooted grievances regarding environmental concerns, and the elections of 1989 and 1990 saw a measured rise in Green movement activity and mobilisation, threatening the status quo. As a result, by the fifth anniversary of *perestroika* in mid-1990, one its main characteristics had been the development of a widespread and varied environmental movement both inside and outside of the electoral system (ibid.).

3.3 The importance of political opportunities to the Green movement

There is no doubt that social movements are affected by their political environment, none more so than the Green movement in the Soviet Union where political opportunities were emerging for the first time. It can be argued, that given the sociological context the provision of political opportunities was a crucial factor, both objectively in providing such opportunities and subjectively in providing incentives for mobilisation in local contexts.

Political opportunity environments provide both the possibility for movements to arise and indicate the likelihood for success (Kitschelt 1986: 63). The number of political parties and groups that can effectively articulate different demands influences the openness of a political environment; the larger the number of such groups, the more 'centrifugal' a political system is, making it more difficult for elites to monopolise decision making power. For almost 70 years, the Soviet Union was the antithesis of such an open environment and only the fundamental restructuring of Soviet society could break the Communist Party's monopoly on power; such centralisation of power had prevented any form of Green movement from emerging until the late 1980's.

The changing political opportunity structure in the Soviet Union had four central effects on the Green movement in the 1980's. Firstly, the increasingly open political environment of *glasnost* provided the political opportunity for environmental movements to both emerge and gain momentum. Specifically, openness increased the capacity for Green groups to form without reprisal, organise protests, publish

articles, propose policy and, ultimately run for election. Secondly, regarding implementation, the success of social movements in achieving their goals is, at least to some degree, shaped by the ability for a legislature to coordinate policies and mediate with the executive (ibid.). The constitutional changes implemented by Gorbachev, where policies could be properly discussed in the Congress of People's Deputies and Supreme Soviet by non-Communist Party politicians, represented increased opportunity for successful implementation of desirable environmental policies. Gorbachev's abandonment of the river's diversion scheme is an example of how such increased openness gave rise to greater influence for the environmental movement (French 1990: 30). Thirdly, the level of central government control over resources and political decision-making defined the extent to which government hegemony could be challenged by the Green movement, along with the level of repression. Though the government provided few specific resources to scientists, intelligentsia and citizens to lobby for environmental interests, it certainly did not prevent the use of its official statistics or state-owned media in lobbying for such improvements, and in this sense, opportunities were provided for environmentalists to utilise resources for the first time. Finally, political opportunities are also affected by the influence of the judiciary and secret services, particularly concerning the resolution of political conflicts that often emerge from social movements. Again, an increased tolerance of civil unrest, protesting and striking furthered the room to manoeuvre that the Green movement had to mobilise the increased environmental consciousness that was enveloping Soviet society. The opportunities provided by competitive elections and greater openness allowed the Green movement to develop in its organisational complexity and increase the sophistication of its tactics (Butterfield and Sedatis 1991: 2). Therefore, it can be seen that the *possibility* for emergence of the Green movement can be explained by the fundamental changes initiated throughout Soviet society under Gorbachev.

From the perspective of the Communists reformers, the era of *glasnost* had more far reaching consequences than was originally intended, exemplified by the collapse of the Soviet Union itself (Tarrow 1994: 74). Indeed, the spiralling levels of environmental protest in the USSR represented not simply increasing opportunities for grass roots Green movements, but also opportunities for nationalist elites who would seek to harness the power of movements for their own ends.

However, structural analysis alone has limitations in identifying the causation of the Soviet Green movement (Gamson and Meyer 1996: 76-77); analysis of political opportunity structures explains only how a movement *can* emerge and not specifically *why* it emerges. Therefore, more detailed analysis is required of the reasons for environmental grievances to emerge in the first place, and the role such grievances played in fuelling an environmentalist. Whilst early collective activity had taken emotional, demonstrative forms of protest, by the end of the 1980's the experience and interactions of Green activists had led to them becoming more organised and successful. Regional Green movements increasingly developed their own distinct platforms, publications, spokespeople and coordinated to support candidates for office. As such, different Green groups were able to share and disseminate information, tactics and experiences in response to increased opportunity (Butterfield and Sedatis 1991: 2). Therefore, the role of micromobilisation, resource mobilisation and collective consciousness framing must also be considered.

4. The origins and construction of the Soviet Green movement

Though liberated by the structural shifts of the 1980's, the identification of changing opportunity structures alone does not explain the inherent demands for the emergence of thousands of environmental groups, nor why the Soviet Green movement, "attracted supporters from virtually every nationality, age group, and socio-economic category" (Ziegler 1991: 113). Soviet environmental groups were diverse in their goals, structures and tactics, rendering it difficult to make generalisations about them (French 1990: 31; Ziegler 1991: 125); some sought to preserve cultural and natural heritage, whilst others some wished to realign the USSR to a truly Marxist direction that was not to the detriment of the environment (See, for example, Bahro 1984). The Soviet Green movement was a juxtaposition of a number of environmental groups often interlaced with other movements. It can also be noted that many groups were not driven by a political ideology, but rather scientific data or informal empirical observations (McAdam et al., 1988: 711). However, a common goal uniting Green groups was to educate the population about the environmental ills of the current system and rectify the degradation that was proving detrimental to the country's health and eco-system (French 1990: 31; Ziegler 1991: 125).

Conventionally, "Green" politics is regarded as being centred around four 'pillars': environmental sustainability, social justice, direct democracy and peace (for detailed analysis see Wall 2005). I will seek to analyse the Soviet Green movement on its own terms, which generally encompassed notions of all of these principles, though primarily was concerned with environmental issues. The Soviet Green movement often worked synergistically with nationalist movements that sought subsidiarity and democracy, and with labour and women's movements, which campaigned for social justice.

4.1 Historical context of environmental grievances

Though the aforementioned structural transformations provided the opportunities for environmental concerns to be collectively voiced for the first time, the roots of the movement ran deeper (French 1990: 30). The Soviet Union had made early

contributions to environmentalist thought, in particular adopting the perspective of the Russian philosopher Vernadsky, who developed the concept of a world divided into a biosphere and the 'noosphere' – the aspect of nature under the influence of human activity (2006). Soviet officials publicly, if not practically, supported Vernadsky's warning that without care, human activities would damage the natural world irreparably (See Yanshin, 1988; Altshuler and Mnatsakanyan, 1988; French 1990). Following the Russian Revolution, several environmentalists had attempted to integrate an ecological consciousness into the ephemeral government of the Bolsheviks (Ziegler 1987: 49; Gare 1996). However, whilst environmentalists were prominent in the early years of Communist rule, particularly amongst the Left Opposition, they came under increasing attack in the 1930's by Stalin, who saw the natural world as subordinate to human kind, to be exploited to expedite the industrialisation required to outpace the capitalist West (Kelley, Stunkel and Wescott 1976: 223; DeFronzo 1996: 49). As such, the potential leaders of an ephemeral Soviet Green movement were silenced, sent to work camps and executed (See Powell 1989).

During the 1960's, a vibrant student movement concerned with nature protection developed at Moscow State University, fighting for greater protection of nature preserves and biodiversity. The group encompassed a degree of direct action, but was tolerated provided it focussed only on nature reserves and did not broaden criticisms to Soviet economic and industrial policy (French 1990: 30). In the same decade, a group of scientists and intellectuals began a campaign to save Lake Baikal after a polluting pulp and paper mill was constructed on the shoreline. Later, in the 1980's, a similar group coalesced to prevent a project that would have reversed the direction of Siberian rivers to supply water to arid Soviet Central Asia (ibid.). Indeed, working within the auspices of technocracy and bureaucracy, the intelligentsia achieved a major success in persuading the Gorbachev to cancel the river diversion scheme (Soviet Economy 1988). Such early examples of environmental protest highlight that environmental concerns existed before the age of *glasnost*, but also that before that period, there was no possibility for collective mobilisation, mass demonstrations or the use of the media to facilitate collective consciousness. In the words of Russian environmentalist Natalya Yourina, "In the sixties, only individuals protested [...] a movement didn't exist" (French 1990: 30).

4.2 The Development of an Environmental Consciousness

The period of the late 1980's gave rise to a widespread environmental movement across all segments of society. In nearly all of the Soviet republics, citizens began to protest as never before regarding environmental issues (French 1990: 30). Increasingly, tens of thousands of Soviet citizens turned out to protest against the building of nuclear power stations, sites of air and water pollution, beach closures and various other aspects of environmental degradation (Marples 1996: 127-133; Darst 1990; Sheehy and Voronitsyn 1988). This would have not have occurred if a growing collective environmental consciousness had not spread across the USSR.

Like other social movements that emerged under *glasnost* and *perestroika*, the grievances that drove the Green movement were longstanding and deep-rooted (Butterfield and Sedatis 1991: 3). However, unlike other movements, the environment was an issue that had received little public attention during the Brezhnev era (ibid.: 4). As empirical and scientific realisation of the extent of environmental degradation came to be realised, Soviet citizens, scientists and intelligentsia increasingly demanded environmental protection measures to be implemented. In fuelling environmental concerns, the "gap between words and deeds," with regards to the broken promises by the Communist Party elite, angered the population into mobilising (Digest of the Soviet Press, May 22 1985: 8).

The role of individual empirical experience in shaping collective consciousness proved extremely important and ecological concerns served as a rallying point for voluntary political participation. Concern regarding the pollution of air, water and soil, as well as radiation sickness, mobilised Soviet citizens who would otherwise have remained politically inactive (Ziegler 1991: 113). Through the 1970's and 1980's, the Soviet population became increasingly concerned about the state of their environment as it became apparent that pollution was not only affecting their health, but also of their off-spring, with evidence of genetic mutation and birth defects increasingly documented (Marples 1991: 134; Ziegler 1991: 113). For example, in Donetsk, a mining town, citizens suffered lung cancer incidence 300 times the Soviet average, whilst the incidence of genetic abnormalities in Siberian babies was

noticeably increasing (Komarov 1978: ii). Under *glasnost*, *Pravda* and other Soviet news agencies were reporting in explicit detail the nature of smog, radiation and chemical pollution, highlighting how they posed significant health risks (Ziegler 1991: 116). The collective disenchantment regarding environmental degradation that was to erupt into social movement activity was in the most part not unique to Gorbachev's leadership (Butterfield and Sedatis 1991: 11). Widespread industrialisation, and the ensuing environmental problems, had become starkly obvious to Soviet citizens by the 1980's by which time, at an individual level at least, many Soviet citizens had long harboured environmental grievances. Public concern regarding the environment reached a zenith by 1987. Even according to official statistics, 83.5 per cent of the population were either "very strongly" or "rather strongly" disturbed with the state of the environment of the Soviet Union (USSR State Committee for the Protection of Nature 1988). Whereas in the West, academics credited higher levels of environmental consciousness with higher levels of education amongst certain strata of the population (See Inglehart 1971), in the Soviet Union, such was the dire state of the environment for most people, ecological problems were self-evident.

The intelligentsia across the Eastern bloc had long highlighted the incompatibility of socialism in practice with that of socialism of theory, both on human and ecological grounds (Weiner 1999: 437; Mandel 1989: 82; Goldman 1972: 18-22). Such a critique is most profound in the work of the East German, Rudolph Bahro, who analysed the Stalinist model in these terms and advocated ecological and social change from a Marxist perspective (Bahro 1977; 1984). Environmentalism in the USSR was not automatically associated with a perceived inherent flaw in the ideal of socialism. In keeping with the interpretation of Bahro (but not necessarily because of him), many Greens saw themselves nominally as communists as well, but environmental concerns became increasingly paramount.

According to Snow and Benford (1988), when individual frames of consciousness become congruent with those of others, 'frame alignment' occurs - the formation of a collective identity that is the basis of a collective consciousness (198; Snow et al. 1986: 464). Whilst collective frame alignment over large regions may only have been possible publicly after the advent of *glasnost*, the pre-existing individual and micro-level environmental consciousness of Soviet citizens provided the crucial foundations

for collective identities, enhancing the ability for the Green movement to mobilise participants.

For its opponents, environmental abuses served as an obvious indictment of the Communist Party's claim that its economic planning benefited all Soviet citizens (Ziegler 1991: 113). Even by 1978, some 10 per cent of the inhabitable land of the Soviet Union was biologically dead (Komarov 1978:131). Just 30 per cent of Soviet sewage was adequately treated whilst pesticides made 30 per cent of the food chain dangerous to human health (McCuen 1993: 14). The rapacious effect on the environment, induced by industrialisation and centralised decision-making, served as a uniting frame of reference for those across the political spectrum who wished to see decision making localised. Moscow's environmental policies had proved ineffective in solving the problems that industrialisation had caused. Towards the end of the 1980's, even the regime's most loyal supporters increasingly questioned its dogmatic approach to economic growth at any cost. In Ukraine, the emergence of *Zelenyi Svit* was testimony to the fact that the Moscow-based State Nature committee was not fulfilling its role to consider local concerns (Marples 1991: 138). Such concerns manifested themselves on the second anniversary of Chernobyl, where a demonstration brought over 10,000 people onto the streets of Kiev (ibid.: 139). Meanwhile, a committee set up jointly by the Central Committee and Council of Ministers to monitor the environment openly criticised governmental practices of myopic 'departmentalism' – putting short-term economic priorities above those of long term environmental sustainability (See Komarov 1989).

In keeping with framing and social constructivist theories, such policy failure served to exacerbate social grievances (Gamson and Meyer 1996: 283). Environmental damage led to increased political participation as Moscow's failure to remedy it emphasised the lack of control that individuals had over their lives in the USSR (Ziegler 1991: 116). The failure of the Soviet regime to address environmental problems, demonstrated how a centralised, bureaucratic system proved incapable of harbouring the flexibility and responsiveness to deal effectively with such issues (ibid.: 113). Increasingly, Soviet citizens mobilised behind common interests and identities, demanding and threatening widespread social change.

4.3 Chernobyl: The amplification of framing processes

No single event served to fuel environmental consciousness across the Soviet Union, nor indeed the world, more than the Chernobyl disaster of April 1986 (Petryna 2002: 1; Butterfield and Sedatis 1991: 11). The political impact of Chernobyl reverberated across the USSR, as it did across the world (Turner 2001: 165; Ziegler 1991: 116). Sociologically, the event provided frame amplification for the Green movement in clarifying and invigorating existing ecological concerns which bridged the movement across the USSR (See Snow et al. 1986: 469 for elaboration on frame amplification and bridging).

For example, there had long existed public concern regarding the levels of pollution in Ukraine's rivers (Marples 1991: 164; Radianska Ukraina 1989). By 1987, as a result of the frame amplification and micromobilisation after Chernobyl, Ukrainians wrote letters, articles and petitions, demonstrating against plans to divert Ukrainian rivers and build a new complex of canals (Sotsialisticheskaia industriia 1985; Tvarynnytstvo Ukrainy 1985). By 1988, anti-nuclear protests throughout the Green movement had become not only evident in Ukraine, but across the Soviet Union (Marples 1988; Marples 1991: 134). Notably, groups utilised scarce resources to oppose the building of nuclear power stations in the Crimea, halting Moscow's proposals in 1989 (Nauka i Suspil'stvo: 1989: 30-31).

Simultaneously, Moscow's secretive response to Chernobyl exemplified to Soviet citizens that even under *glasnost* and *perestroika* their system was not so open that they could trust their government to disclose facts to safeguard their health (Gould 1991: 61; Marples 1986: 124; Medvedev 1993). When it became realised that thousands of citizens had not been evacuated who should have been in the wake of Chernobyl, and that there had been a delay in evacuating those in the 30km exclusion zone in the first instance, this served to amplify collective consciousness further (Medvedev 1990: 151; Marples 1988: 114-115). It was because of the dishonesty of the Soviet government that the Ukrainian Green movement in particular became so strong in response (Stewart 1990: 4; Marples 1991: 134). The credibility gap served both to amplify frames of reference across the Green movement, but to

also bridge them with other movements, namely nationalist movements (Snow et al. 1986: 467; Marples 1991: 137).

4.4 The role of “Environmental Nationalism”

Environmental activism was one social movement relatively tolerated, perhaps as Communist elites did not regard it as serious “politics” (Weiner 1999: 429). However, the impact of Soviet industrialisation on the eco-system became linked to nationalist movements throughout the Soviet Union. The legacy of central economic planning and environmental degradation were concerns of both Green and nationalist movements which had flourished as a result of greater political opportunities (Ziegler 1991: 117). Indeed, many of the ethnic minority populations that existed within the Soviet Union, felt that Moscow has exploited resources and destroyed eco-systems in an almost colonial fashion (ibid.: 114). Even Communist Party representatives condemned the “colonial exploitation” of Siberia’s natural resources and pollution of its water supplies (Izvestia 1990: 3). Nationalist Armenian intelligentsia publicly denounced the Soviet regime for waging an “ecological genocide” against their people. Not only were national groups increasingly intolerant of risks to their health and environment, but they were distrustful of centralised decision makers and their ambivalence to environmental protection (FBIS Daily Report, February 2 1990). For example, Ruthenian and Magyar residents of the Transcarpathian region launched a protest movement in 1990 against a radar station, which was found to be nuclear powered, despite official claims that it was to be a pasta factory (Ziegler 1991: 114). Upon the mobilisation of both movements occurred in the late 1980’s, it became increasingly clear to both that their respective grievances against Moscow tessellated

In those republics most politically centrifugal of Moscow, such as the Baltic states, the environmental movement could be seen to adopt the most nationalist overtones (French 1990: 31). In Estonia, nationalist sentiments had been historically strong and environmentalists tended to side with the nationalist movement in order to utilise resources and maximise electoral success (Report on the State of the Environment in the USSR 1988; Ziegler 1991). The national front movements in Belarus and Azerbaijan also incorporated heavy reference to environmental protection in their platforms to attract Green activists (Ziegler 1991: 115). Therefore, environmentalism

and nationalism were able to bridge their relative frames of reference, given that there existed "a linkage of [these] two [...] ideologically congruent [...] frames regarding a particular issue or problem" (Snow et al. 1986: 467). As such, many environmentalists became pre-occupied with independence politics and saw sovereign autonomy as a route by which environmental protection could be ensured (See Marples 1990; Green 1990).

Specific ecological commonalties can also be identified between those environmentalist movements that were most significantly infused with nationalism. Environmental problems relating to agriculture proved particularly controversial and stirred nationalist sentiments (Ziegler 1991: 117). In Moldova, *Miscarea verzilor*, was founded in 1988, responding to concerns regarding the use of pesticides and air and water pollution (Socor 1989; Ziegler 1991: 114-115). Whilst the Soviet average for using pesticides was 0.5 to 1.0 kilograms per hectare, in Moldova the average was 20.6 kilograms or higher (Ziegler 1991: 115; Wolfson 1989;). Illness afflicted thousands of agricultural workers each year due to handling pesticides, whilst Moldovan children were found to suffer lower intelligence levels as result of chemical consumption (Singural 1989; Ziegler 1991: 115). Romanian nationalists seized on such abuses in order to further their cause.

It can be argued that the main theoretical commonality that environmentalism and nationalism share is that both emerge in industrialised societies. As Gellner argued, agrarian society tends not to be favourable to nationalistic principles, rather "the age of transition to industrialism was bound, according to our model, also to be an age of nationalism" (1983: 40). Meanwhile, Hobsbawm's (1990) analysis is more cynical in positing the notion that elites manipulate nationhood in order to maintain political control of territory. Such an analysis is certainly applicable to the Soviet Union, where nationalist elites sought to unite emergent social movements under the umbrella of independence, and at the same time constructed a 'proto-nationalism', Such empirical observation supports the idea that, "nations are more often the consequence of setting up a state than they are its foundations" (ibid.: 78)

However, not all environmental groups in the USSR succumbed to nationalist influence. The pan-Soviet Social-Ecological Union emerged as an umbrella group of

more than 150 non-governmental organisations in 260 cities and towns, most notably campaigning for the successful abandonment of plans to divert the River Volga (Weiner 1999: 433; French 1990: 31; Ziegler 1991: 115). Other such national coordinating bodies that represented the Green movement included the Association for the Support of Ecological Initiatives, the Ecological Union, Ecology and Peace, and the appropriately named Green Movement (French 1990: 31). Many environmental groups were based in cities or dedicated to specific environmental causes. For example, *Episentr* was an umbrella organisation based in Leningrad (now St. Petersburg) which united, smaller, localised groups to successfully oppose construction of dams across the Gulf of Finland and secured policies to clear up Leningrad's polluted water supply (Ziegler 1991: 115; Posev 1987: 30-40). In response to the environmental nationalism in other republics, Russian nationalists accredited blame for Russia's ecological ills to selfish and corrupt bureaucrats who had squandered national wealth in the pursuit of individual gain (Ziegler 1991: 122; Green 1990; Keller 1990; Petro 1990). Therefore, whilst nationalism became a prominent feature of the Soviet Green movement, it was not a primary cause of its emergence, rather a vehicle through which collective interests were expressed and resources mobilised.

4.5 Collective agency and resource mobilisation

As discussed in the theoretical framework, it has been identified, particularly through extensive work on social movements in the West, that formation of social movements is often facilitated by the existence of prior organisations of collective action (see Tilly, 1978, 62 -3; Butterfield and Sedatis 1991: 7; McAdam 1996:15). The role that these pre-existing social organisations played in the Soviet Union was as "transmissions belts from the state to society" (Butterfield and Sedatis 1991: 7). Whereas the existence of a totalitarian infrastructure historically stifled the environmental movement in terms of opportunity, it at the same time facilitated the notion of coalescing collective and personal interests to achieve political ends in the minds of Soviet citizens. The importance of mass mobilisation was a crucial premise of totalitarian government for the Communist Party, indeed it is arguably its critical element (see Friedrich and Brzezinski 1956). It was the collective responsibility of totalitarian infrastructure not only to channel collective action, but to contain it as well

(Butterfield and Sedatis 1991: 6). Before the ascendance of Gorbachev, environmental activists were forced to operate inside the state apparatus. As such, group activity amongst specialists was an important aspect of policy-making but environmental concerns were manipulated to serve wider ideological goals until alternative political opportunities arose under *glasnost* (Ziegler 1991: 114).

A factor in the success of social movements is the ability to facilitate and mobilise a potential membership and negotiate the existent political opportunity structure (McAdam 1996: 339). The more relaxed political climate and environmental disasters such as Chernobyl, as well as general environmental degradation provided the *raison d'être* for the emergence of hundreds of environmental groups across the USSR (Ziegler 1991: 114). Tarrow emphasises the importance of the emergent phase of a social movement in sustaining collective action (Tarrow 1988: 7). Therefore, whilst perhaps not primary to the causation of the Green movement, the action pursued through collective agency responding to the political opportunity structure and wider political environment remains relevant.

The leaders of the movement tended to be well educated, yet the movement's success was arguably due to its broad appeal and the fundamental, materialist nature of environmental grievances (Butterfield and Sedatis 1991: 7). The introduction of competitive elections heightened the relative advantage of such a broad appeal vis-à-vis other movements, but at the same time imposed a formal organisation structure with which the movement was required to negotiate. Therefore, the introduction of competitive elections saw environmental groups develop into more professional, bureaucratic structures in order to maximise successful outcomes (ibid.). Such a desire to engage with the electoral system often came from the membership, rather than leadership figures. For example in Ukraine, grass roots members of *Zelenyi Svit* drove the reclassification of the group as a political party, contrasting against the leadership's more cautious approach (Marples 1988). It could certainly be seen that personal interests were satiated by the collective direction of the Green movement, with regards to psycho-sociological and rational choice perspectives (see Dunleavy 1991). However, the nature of organisation varied from group to group, and in terms of comprising the movement as a whole, collective agency appears to be a secondary causal factor behind the

emergence of the Soviet Green movement when compared to the role of political opportunities and the emergence of a collective environmental consciousness and grievances.

The obstacles that a movement faces, both externally and internally, provides at least some importance on its ability to mobilise resources (Tarrow 1998: 106; Snow et al. 1986: 472). The foundation of the Lake Baikal Protection Society in 1987 lends some support for theorists who cite resource mobilisation as being pertinent to the emergence of the Green movement (Trass 1984: 43-49; Galazii 1984). Their successful opposition to the building of a 70km pipeline to pump factory waste into one of the lake's tributaries was partly due to that by mid-1990, the Fund had raised 600,000 rubles to support the Lake's preservation (Massey 1990: 58-62). The highly successful Estonian and Latvian Greens also harnessed financial resources to maximise press and television coverage, again suggesting that resource mobilisation was important (Izvestiia 1990: 3). Resource mobilisation theorists tend to regard formalisation as requisite for a social movement and emphasise the ability for it to mobilise and coordinate resources (McCarthy and Zald 1977). However, whilst resources and pooled collaboration proved important, it appears the developing environmental consciousness and political opportunity structure proved most vital in bringing the Russian, Estonian and Latvian Green movements to life. Many other Green groups had little in terms of resources but were equally successful. For example, in Ukraine, *Zelenyi Svit*, utilised scarce resources to successfully halt Moscow's plans to build a nuclear power station in Crimea in 1989. Therefore, whilst resource mobilisation certainly aided the Green movement, it was more a catalyst to consolidation and success, rather than direct cause for the emergence in the first instance.

The internal agency of a movement and its ability to mobilise resources, can be seen merely as part of the process of adapting to the structural context, and as a consequence of framing processes (Kriesi 1996: 157). In addition, focussing on the primacy of agency and resources does not acknowledge that movements are primarily rooted in, and driven by, their structural contexts. Without changes to the political opportunity structure, the emergence of a Green movement would not have been possible. Similarly, without objective reasons for the development of

environmentalist consciousness, and the micromobilisation context within which framing and collective consciousness is facilitated, then resource mobilisation and the role of collective agency would be moot. Whilst the role of collective agency and resource mobilisation are certainly important in the analysis of specific successes of various environmental groups, they do not provide an explanation for the emergence of the Soviet Green movement as a whole (Kendall 2006).

6. Conclusions

In the West, it has often been argued that the emergence of Green social movements was as a result of the growth of post-materialist values in wealthy societies and increased levels of education, most famously advocated by Inglehart (See Inglehart 1971; 2000; Inglehart et. al. 2004). However, in the Soviet Union the emergence of Green politics was rooted to a materialist discourse; chronic environmental degradation and catastrophe was increasingly noticeable, and noticeably affecting the health of citizens, amid relative material deprivation (Ziegler 1991: 128). Therefore, the post-materialist thesis cannot be used to explain the emergence of the Green social movement in the Soviet Union. The emergence of the Soviet Green movement was instead fuelled by factors that can be explained through the use of traditional social movement theories.

This dissertation first identified how the changing political opportunity structure facilitated the growth of the Green movement. However, a structural analysis alone does not explain why inherent grievances that existed; rather it explains how groups came to emerge. Therefore, accrediting the framing processes involved in the emergence of environmental consciousness proves essential in understanding the causation for the social construction of the Green movement.

Where Soviet scientists and theorists had previously attempted to raise awareness of ecologically damaging economic practices, they lacked the political freedom to mobilise public opinion against Soviet policies. As such, the advent of *glasnost*, *perestroika* and *demokratizatsiia* provided political opportunities for the first time and proved to be the lifeblood of the Soviet Green movement. Glasnost and democratisation made the Soviet system more open, tolerant and centrifugal, thus it became far more difficult for central government to impose nuclear power stations, toxic waste dumps and polluting industrial plants in the wake of Green mobilisation (ibid.: 129).

From its emergence, the Green movement engaged with existing social structures according to its own resources and agency. However, identification of such factors, given wide disparities, did not play any fundamental part in the causation of the

emergence of the Green movement *prima facie*. Therefore, the internal dynamics of the Green social movement, in this instance, prove secondary factors. Further study could investigate the relative importance of comparative mobilisation of resources and agency between Green groups in different Soviet republics.

Social movements are not simply a side effect of rapid social change. It is true that opening political opportunities served to facilitate an environmentalist consciousness, but this would not have developed if it had not been for the environmental degradation rife throughout Soviet society that formed major grievances for Soviet citizens and local communities. Whilst Gorbachev's reforms had opened a 'Pandora's Box' of political opportunity, chronic pollution became self-evident to Soviet citizens, developing not only an ecological consciousness, but also a collective desire mobilise a wide-ranging and prominent Green movement as witnessed throughout the late 1980's.

References

- AGANBEYAN, A. translated by SZAMUELY, H. (1989) *Inside Perestroika – The Future of the Soviet Economy*, New York: Harper & Row
- ALTSHULER, I. and MNATSAKANYAN, R. "Excerpts from a Roundtable at Moscow State University," *Environment*, December 1988, Moscow: Novosti Press Agency
- BAHRO, R. (1977) *The Alternative in Eastern Europe*, London: Verso
- BAHRO, R. (1980) *Socialism and Survival*, London: Heretic Books
- BAHRO, R. (1984) *From Red to Green*, Thetford: The Thetford Press
- BARNETT, A. (1988) *Soviet Freedom*, London: Picador
- BUTTERFIELD, J and SEDATIS, J.B. (1991) "The Emergence of Social Movements in the Soviet Union" in SEDATIS, J. B. and BUTTERFIELD, J. (eds.) (1991) *Perestroika from below: Social Movements in the Soviet Union*, Oxford: Westview Press
- CARLSNAES, W, (1992) 'The Agency-Structure Problem in Foreign. Policy Analysis', *International Studies Quarterly*, 36:3, pp. 245-270
- CHAINIKOV, S. (ed.) (1990) *Who's Who in the Soviet Government*, Moscow: Novosti Press Agency Publishing House
- CLIFF, T. (1955) *State Capitalism in Russia*, London: Bookmarks Publications
- COMMUNIST PARTY OF THE SOVIET UNION *Pravda*, 16 October 1990,
- De TOCQUEVILLE, A translated by GILBERT, S. (1955) *The Old Regime and the French Revolution*, Doubleday Anchor
- DEFRONZO, J. (1996) *Revolutions & Revolutionary Movements*, London: Westview Press
- DUNLEAVY, P. (1991) *Democracy, Bureaucracy and Public Choice: Economic Models in Political Science*, London: Pearson
- ENGELS, F. and MARX, K. (1998) *The Communist Manifesto*, London: The Merlin Press
- FRENCH, H. F. (1990), 'Green Revolutions: Environmental Reconstruction in Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union', *Worldwatch*, Paper 99, Washington, DC: Worldwatch Institute
- FRIEDMAN, D. and MCADAM, D. (1992) "Collective Identity and Activism: Networks, Choices and the Life of a Social Movement", in Morris, A. and MCLURG MUELLER, C. (eds.) *Frontiers in New Social Movements Theory*, New Have: Yale University

- POWERAKER, J. (1995) *Theorizing Social Movements*, London: Pluto Press
- GAMSON, W. (1975) *The Strategy of Social Protest*. Sussex: Irwin-Dorsey
- GAMSON, W. and MEYER, D (1996) "Framing Political Opportunity" in MCADAM, D. et al. (1996), *Comparative Perspectives on Social Movements: Political Opportunities, Mobilizing Structures and Cultural Framings*, New York: Cambridge University Press
- GARE, A., *Soviet Environmentalism: The Path Not Taken*, in BENTON, E. (ed.) (1996) *The Greening of Marxism*, New York: Guildford
- GEARY, D. (1981) *European Labour Protests 1848-1939* New York: St. Martin's Press
- GELLNER, E. (1983) *Nations and Nationalism*, New York: Cornell University Press
- GIDDENS, A. (1976) *New Rules of Sociological Method: a Positive Critique of interpretative Sociologies*, London: Hutchinson
- GOLDMAN, M. I. (1972) *The Spoils of Progress: Environmental Pollution in the Soviet Union*, Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press
- GORBACHEV, M. (1988) *Perestroika*, London: William Collins Sons & Co.
- GOULD, P. (1990) *Fire in the Rain – The Democratic Consequences of Chernobyl*, Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press
- HARVEY, R. (2003) *Comrades – The Rise and Fall of World Communism*, London: John Murray
- HOBSBAWM, E. J. (1990) *Nations and Nationalism since 1780*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
- HOPKINS, A. T. (1993) *Unchained Reactions – Chernobyl, Glasnost, and Nuclear Deterrence*, Washington: National Defense University Press
- INGLEHART, R. "The Silent Revolution in Post-Industrial Societies", in *American Political Science Review* 65, 1971
- INGLEHART, R. "Globalization and Postmodern Values" in *The Washington Quarterly* 23:1, 2000
- INGLEHART, R., BASANEZ M., DIEZ-MEDRANO, J., HALMANN, L. and LUIJK R. (eds.) (2004) *Human Beliefs and Values. A cross-cultural sourcebook based on the 1999-2002 values surveys*, Siglo XXL Editores
- JENKINS, J. C. and KLANDERMANS, B. (eds) (1995), *The Politics of Social Protest: Comparative Perspectives on States and Social Movements*, London: UCL Press

- KELLY, D., STUNKEL, K. and WESCOTT, R. (1976) *The Economic Superpowers and the Environment – The United States, The Soviet Union, and Japan*, San Francisco: W.H. Freeman and Company
- KENDALL, D. (2005) *Sociology In Our Times*, Thomson Wadsworth Press
- KITSCHOLT, H. P. (1986) "Political Opportunity Structures and Political Protest: Anti-Nuclear Movements in Four Democracies", *British Journal of Political Science*, 16, 1, January 1997
- KLANDERMANS, B. (1997) *The Social Psychology of Protest* Oxford: Blackwell
- KOMAROV, B. (1978) *The Destruction of the nature in the Soviet Union*, London: Pluto Press
- KRIESI, H. (1996) "The Organizational Structure of New Social Movements in a Political Context" in McADAM, D. et al. (1996), *Comparative Perspectives on Social Movements: Political Opportunities, Mobilizing Structures and Cultural Framings*, New York: Cambridge University Press
- LANE, D. (1990) *Soviet Society under Perestroika*, London: Routledge
- LANGLOIS, S. (2001) "Identity Movements" in SMELSNER, N. and BATES, P. (eds.) (2001) *International Encyclopaedia of the Social and Behavioural Sciences*, Amsterdam: Elsevier Science
- LAYDER, D. (1994) *Understanding Social Theory*, London: Sage
- LIPSEY, M. S (1983) 'Radicalism or Reformism: The Sources of Working-Class Politics' *American Political Science Review*
- LITTLEJOHN, G. (1984) *A Sociology of the Soviet Union*, London: MacMillan Press
- LUKÁCS, G. (translated by LIVINGSTONE, R.) (1971) *History and Class Consciousness – Studies in Marxist Dialectics*, London: Merlin Press
- MANDEL, E. translated by FAGEN, G. (1989) *Beyond Perestroika – The Future of Gorbachev's USSR*, London: Verso
- MARCY, S. (1990) *Perestroika – A Marxist Critique*, New York: WW Publishers
- MARKS, G. (1989) *Unions in Politics* Princeton: Princeton University Press
- MARPLES, D. R. (1986) *Chernobyl and Nuclear Power in the USSR*, New York; St Martin's Press
- MARPLES, D. R. (1988) *The Social Impact of the Chernobyl Disaster*, New York: St Martin's Press

MARPLES, D. R. (1991) "The Greening of Ukraine: Ecology and the Emergence of *Zelenyi Svit*, 1986-1990" in SEDATIS, J. B. and BUTTERFIELD, J. (eds.) (1991) *Perestroika from below: Social Movements in the Soviet Union*, Oxford: Westview Press

MARPLES, D. R. (1996) *Belarus: From Soviet Rule to Nuclear Catastrophe* Alberta: University of Alberta Press

MATTHEWS, M. (1978) *Privilege in the Soviet Union – A Study of Elite Life-Styles under Communism*, London: George Allen & Unwin

McADAM, D. et. al. (1996), *Comparative Perspectives on Social Movements: Political Opportunities, Mobilizing Structures and Cultural Framings*, New York: Cambridge University Press

McADAM, D. "Micromobilization contexts and recruitment to activism", *International Social Movement Research*, Vol. 1, Pages 125-154

McCARTHY, J. and ZALD, M. (1977) "Resource Mobilization and Social Movements: A Partial Theory", *American Journal of Sociology*, Volume 82, Issue 6, May, 1212-1241

McCUEN, G. and SWANSON, R. (1993) *Toxic Nightmare – Ecocide in the USSR & Eastern Europe*, Wisconsin: Gary E. McCuen Publications

MEDVEDEV, Z. (1990) *The Legacy of Chernobyl*, New York: W.W. Norton & Company

MEDVEDEV, G. (1993) *No Breathing Room – The Aftermath of Chernobyl*, London: BasicBooks

OBERSCHALL, A (1996) "Opportunities and framing in the Eastern European Revolts of 1989" in MCADAM, D. et. al. (1996), *Comparative Perspectives on Social Movements: Political Opportunities, Mobilizing Structures and Cultural Framings*, New York: Cambridge University Press

O'CONNOR, J. (1988) "Capitalism, Nature, Socialism: A Theoretical Introduction," *CNS*, 1, Autumn 1988

PARKIN, F. (1972) *Class Inequality & Political Order*, Herts: Paladin

PETRYNA, A. (2002) *Life Exposed – Biological Citizens after Chernobyl*, New Jersey: Princeton University Press

POWELL, D.E. "Conservation in the USSR," *Natural History*, August 1989

RÜDIG, W. 'Between Ecotopia and Disillusionment: Green Parties in European Government', *Environment*, April 2002

SCOTT, A. (1990) *Ideology and the New Social Movements*, London: Unwin Hyman

SEDATIS, J. B. and BUTTERFIELD, J. (eds.) (1991) *Perestroika from below: Social Movements in the Soviet Union*, Oxford: Westview Press

SHENIN, O. "Za stekaliannoi stenoi" *Pravda*, 5 February 1988

SINGLETON, F. (ed.) (1976) *Environmental Misuse in the Soviet Union*, New York: Praeger Publishers

SMELSER, N. (ed.) (1988) *Handbook of Sociology*, Newbury Park: Sage Publications

SNOW, D. A., & BENFORD, R. D. (1988) "Ideology, frame resonance, and participant mobilization" *International Social Movement Research*, 1, 197–217.

SNOW, D. A., ROCHFORD, E. B., WORDEN, S. K., & BENFORD, R. D. (1986) "Frame alignment processes, micromobilization, and movement participation" *American Sociological Review*, 51, 464–481.

STEWART, J. M. (ed.) (1992) *The Soviet Environment: problems, policies and politics*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

SUNY, R. G. (1998) *The Soviet Experiment – Russia, the USSR, and the Successor States*, Oxford: Oxford University Press

TARROW, S. (1998), *Power in Movement: Social Movements, Collective Action and Politics*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

TILLY, C. (1978) *From Mobilization to Revolution*, New York: McGraw-Hill

TILLY, C. (1999) "From Interactions to Outcomes in Social Movements" in GIUGNI, M. et al. (eds.) *How Social Movements Matter*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press

TURNOCK, D. (ed.) (2001) *East Central Europe and the former Soviet Union*, London: Arnold

UKRAINIAN SOVIET SOCIALIST REPUBLIC, *Radians'ka Ukraina*, 22 August 1989

UKRAINIAN SOVIET SOCIALIST REPUBLIC GOVERNMENT, *Sotsialisticheskaia industriia*, 5 September 1985

UKRAINIAN SOVIET SOCIALIST REPUBLIC GOVERNMENT, *Tvarynnystvo Ukrainy*, 10 October 1985

UNION OF SOVIET SOCIALIST REPUBLICS, *Current Digest of the Soviet Press*, 37:17, 22 May 1985

UNION OF SOVIET SOCIALIST REPUBLICS GOVERNMENT, Annual Report of USSR State Committee for the Protection of Nature, 1988

UNION OF SOVIET SOCIALIST REPUBLICS GOVERNMENT, USSR State Committee for the Protection of Nature, *Report on the State of the Environment in the USSR*, 1988

UNION OF SOVIET SOCIALIST REPUBLICS GOVERNMENT, *Izvestiia*, 4 December 1988

UNION OF SOVIET SOCIALIST REPUBLICS GOVERNMENT, *Komjaunimo Tiesa*, 29 March 1989

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA GOVERNMENT, FOREIGN BROADCAST INFORMATION SERVICE, Daily Report, 2 February 1990

VERNADSKY, V.I (2007) *Essays on Geochemistry & the Biosphere*, translated by BARASH, O. Santa Fe, NM, Synergetic Press

WALL, D. (2005) *Babylon and Beyond: The Economics of Anti-Capitalist, Anti-Globalist and Radical Green Movements*, London: Pluto Press

WEINER, D. R. (1999) *A Little Corner of Freedom – Russian Nature Protection from Stalin to Gorbachev*, Berkeley: University of California Press

YANSHIN, A.L., “Reviving Vernadsky’s Legacy”, *Environment*, December 1988, Moscow: Novosti Press Agency

ZIEGLER, C. E. (1987) *Environmental Policy in the USSR*, Massachusetts: University of Massachusetts Press

ZIEGLER, C. E. (1991) “Environmental Politics and Policy under *Perestroika*” in

ZUMBRUNNEN, C. (ed.) translated by QUAM, J. and ZUMBRUNNEN, C. (1992) *Urban Geography in the Soviet Union and United States*, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield